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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 RPO DUBAI 000042

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAN IVLP ALUMNUS JAILED

REF: RPO DUBAI 0038

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CLASSIFIED BY: Ramin Asgard, Director, Iran Regional Presence  
Office, Department of State.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1.(S//NF) SUMMARY: Prominent Iranian HIV/AIDS physicians Drs. Kamiar and Arash Alaei were detained by Iranian authorities sometime in late June and are being held at an undisclosed location, per an email that was forwarded to IRPoffs July 15. Arash was a participant in the first IRPO IVLP program in November 2006 and since attended meetings in Dubai during the visit of ECA Assistant Secretary Goli Ameri May 4. Both Kamiar and Arash have traveled repeatedly to the US since 2003. An Iranian American resident in Dubai, who was questioned repeatedly by Iranian authorities in early 2007, indicated that Arash was also interviewed extensively by the Iranian government last year. The Alaei family has not contacted IRPO and has not asked the USG to make a statement at this time. End Summary.

Forwarded email

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2.(S//NF) IRPO was forwarded an email from a regular Dubai-based Iranian American contact detailing the arrests of brothers, and physicians in the field of HIV/AIDS, Drs. Kamiar and Arash Alaei July 15. The email originated from the Associate Director of the Open Society Institute in New York. The text of the email is as follows:

"Two physician brothers, who have been recognized internationally for their work in the development of HIV/AIDS programs and services in Iran, are being held in prison by the Iranian government. According to reports received from Tehran, Drs. Kamiar and Arash Alaei were taken to an undisclosed location sometime in late June. The reason for their detention is unknown.

Ladan Alomar, Executive Director of the Centro Civico of Amsterdam, NY, a community based organization that provides HIV/AIDS services to the Latino community, received a phone call from a person close to the Alaei brothers and was informed of the situation. The family and friends of Kamiar and Arash in Iran do not know where and under what charges the brothers are being held. The authorities in Tehran have provided no

information about their whereabouts.

Kamiar and Arash Alaei have visited the United States on several occasions to participate in professional activities and have spoken to various audiences about the situation of HIV/AIDS in Iran. Kamiar is a doctoral candidate at the SUNY Albany School of Public Health and had returned to his country in early June to spend his summer vacation working there. He is expected back in Albany in September to start the fall semester. Early this year, the Asia Society recognized him as a 2008 Asia Fellow, 'one of 23 new fellows identified as being among the most promising trendsetters and emerging leaders in the Asia-Pacific region.'

In 2007, from October 3-6, the two brothers participated as speakers in The Aspen Health Forum, a prestigious gathering of US and international health leaders. The event is organized by The Aspen Institute, 'an international nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering enlightened leadership and open-minded dialogue.'

The Alaei brothers have received international recognition for their leadership in HIV/AIDS issues in Iran and for helping to develop model programs to fight AIDS and address the needs of substance users. (Iran has a serious drug use problem, particularly with heroin use, that has fueled the epidemic). They have been featured in interviews by the BBC, the Washington Post, and other media outlets. Their documentary 'Mohammad and the Matchmaker,' which was broadcast by the BBC in June of 2004, features two brothers and their work to address stigma. It features Maryam, a 21-year old widow whose world had fallen apart after the death of her husband - a heroin addict.

For more information, contact Ladan Alomar at 518-842-3762 or lalomar@centrocivico.org."

More background on brothers

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3.(S//NF) Both Kamiar and Arash have received US visas annually since 2003. Arash was a participant in the first IRPO IVLP program in November 2006, on Public Health and Medicine. He also attended meetings and a reception in honor of ECA Assistant Secretary Goli Ameri in Dubai May 4. An Iranian American resident in Dubai, who was questioned extensively by Iranian authorities in early 2007, said that "Arash was under a lot of stress at the same time that I was last year."

4.(S//NF) Following up on two successful Public Health IVLPs in fall 2006, the Alaei brothers remained active in public health related exchanges, including two Child Health and Development IVLPs planned for later this summer. In addition, Arash assisted in recruiting IVLP participants in several non-public health areas.

5.(S//NF) Over the past 18 months, Arash has been ECA's and IRPO's most active exchange alumnus. On a few occasions he inquired whether he could serve "officially" as our main point of contact for exchange. ECA/IRPO declined, believing this would make Alaei a target for IRIG retribution.

6.(S//NF) Over the past few months, Arash was also assisting on a maternal and child health exchange program arranged by ECA through IREX Yerevan. Arash expressed concern to IRPoff during his most recent May meeting in Dubai about one aspect of the IREX program. Iranian-Armenian IREX employees were reportedly recruiting and conducting candidate interviews in Iran. While he expressed concern about the public nature of the IREX program, he has always felt the value of the program offset the risks.

7.(S//NF) As reftel details, an IREX employee working on this exchange was detained in Tehran on June 26. At time of reftel

message, Dr. Arash Alaei was also suspected of being detained. Based on the new information, it now appears that Dr. Kamiar Alaei was also detained at the same time.

Potential assistance by USG

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8.(S//NF) IRPO has not been contacted by the Alaei family and has not been asked for any USG assistance or to make any public statements. The Iranian American said he does not know the family personally, but suggested that Jamie Metzel at the Asia Society "would be the one to contact." IRPO has been in touch with IREX and have asked them to coordinate any inquiries from their Washington DC office with NEA/IR.

ASGARD